nineteen years, although no one knew that when the curtain fell. It wasn't the aging La Jolla High School auditorium, the lack of artistic vision for the future, or a budgetary shortfall that brought this era to an end. UCSD had hired John Stewart to oversee the creation of its arts departments, and Stewart had strong opinions about the relationship between the university and the Playhouse. He argued that the campus needed a theatre, and eventually a drama program. Stewart wanted to relocate the theatre to the heart of campus, but this was rejected by the board; they wanted the Playhouse off campus but not buried within it, especially since parking was plentiful in the original site.

By Steven Adler
Professor Emeritus, Theatre

Recap of Part I (from the January issue): In 1947, a handful of theatre-starved young Hollywood film stars, among them Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire, and Mel Ferrer, created a summer stock theatre at La Jolla High School. Its success led to a search for a permanent home, spearheaded by the Playhouse’s indefatigable board chair, Marian Longstreth. This quest eventually resulted in what would prove to be a fruitful partnership with the new University of California campus that was about to open. The Playhouse board undertook a fundraising campaign in the mid-50s to build a new theatre on Regents-owned land (where the Venter Institute stands today), but the efforts fell short of the mark.

Part II: The quest to raise enough money to bring out the backhoes and build a theatre was plagued by setbacks and contretemps among the Regents, UCOP, UCSD, and the Playhouse. There were legal issues, siting issues, fundraising issues, leadership issues...but it all came down to money. The board could never notch a sizable fundraising victory (they were turned down by the Ford Foundation and similar philanthropic organizations). Celebrity-studded benefit balls brought in some cash, as did a local gala premiere of To Kill a Mockingbird, which of course starred Gregory Peck. The board harvested pledges from local industries...but could never reach its target.

The final production of the 1964 season featured the improbable casting of Zsa Zsa Gabor in Noel Coward's Blithe Spirit and was the Playhouse's last stand for
least 1,700 seats, classrooms, workshops, and an outdoor amphitheatre, and brought in Bertrand Goldberg, the first Chicago architect to design it all with a seemingly generous $3 million budget (Goldberg had never designed a theatre). Once again, despite Marian Longstreth’s efforts, costs outpaced fundraising. Stewart recommended that the university fund half the costs in exchange for half the annual usage, since he knew that a university-only theatre was a distant dream. During what would become a decade-long appeal process, the relationship between the university and the Playhouse continued in frictions. The design for Goldberg’s theatre complex, which looked like a corrugated, curved catapillar, was crammed into the twelve-acre site. The University reconsidered the location due to complications from the city’s 1955 frontage lease and growing antipathy from neighbors who didn’t want this facility built, literally, in their backyards. Late in 1967, it was decided that the footprint was inadequate, and in 1969 the Playhouse quitted the land back to the Regents. The board considered the land where the Emailed to Sandy Lakoff

Things They Didn’t Teach in Hebrew School

1. Where there’s smoke, there may be salmon.
2. No meal is complete without leftovers.
3. According to Jewish dietary law, pork and shellfish may be eaten only in Chinese restaurants.
4. A shmata is a dress that your husband’s ex is wearing.
5. You need ten men for a minyan, but only four in polyester pants and white shoes for pilochnie.
6. One mitzvah can change the world; two will just make you tired.
7. After the destruction of the Second temple, God created Nordstroms.
8. Anything worth saying is worth repeating a thousand times.
9. Next year in Jerusalem. The year after that, how about a nice cruise?
10. Never leave a restaurant empty handed.
11. Spring ahead, fall back, winners in Boca.
12. WASPs leave and never say good bye; Jews say good bye and never leave.
13. Always whisper the names of diseases...
14. If it tastes good, it’s probably not kosher.
15. Without Jewish mothers, who would need therapy?
16. If you have to ask the price, you can’t afford it. But if you can afford it, make sure to tell everybody what you paid.
17. Laugh now, but one day you’ll be driving a Lexus and eating dinner at 4:00 PM in Florida.
18. Synagogue committees should be made up of three members, two of whom should be absent at every meeting.
19. My mother is a typical Jewish woman. Once she was on jury duty. They sent her home. She insisted SHE was guilty.
20. Any time a person goes into a delicatessen and orders a pastrami on white bread, somewhere a Jew dies.
21. It was mealt ime during a flight on El Al. “Would you like dinner?” the flight attendant asked Moshe, seated in front. “What are my choices?” Moshe asked. “Yes or no,” she replied.
22. An elderly Jewish man is knocked down by a car and is brought to the local hospital. A pretty nurse tucks him into bed and says, “Mr. Gevarter, are you comfortable?” Gevarter replies, “I make a nice living.”
23. Three Jewish women get together for lunch. As they are being seated in the restaurant, one takes a deep breath and gives a long, slow “oy.” The second takes a deep breath as well and lets out a long, slow “oy.” The third takes a deep breath and says impatiently, “Girls, I thought we agreed that we weren’t going to talk about our children.”
24. A waiter comes over to a table full of Jewish women and asks, “Is anything right?”
25. A riddle: What is blue, hangs on the wall, and whistles? You could hang it blue. A herring doesn’t whistle? Nu, so it doesn’t whistle!

SIGNS ON SYNAGOGUE BULLETIN BOARDS

Under some management for over 5763 years
Don’t give up. Moses was once a basket case.
What part of “Thou shalt not” don’t you understand?
Anecdotal

Thanks to Peter Levine.

LEXOPHILIA

• Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

• How does Moses make tea? He-he-

brews it.

• England has no kidney bank, but it
does have a Liverpool.

• I tried to catch some fog, but I mist

• They told me I had type-A blood, but

it was a Typo.

• Jokes about German sausage are

the wurst.

• I know a guy who's addicted to

brake fluid, but he says he can stop

any time.

• I stayed up all night to see

where the sun went, and then it
dawned on me.

• This girl said she recognized me

from the vegetarian club, but I'd
never met her before.

• When chemists die, they barium.

• I'm reading a book about anti-

gravity. I just can't put it down.

• I did a theatrical performance

about puns. It was a play on

words.

• Why were the Indians here

first? They had reservations.

• I didn't like my beard at

first. Then it grew on me.

• Did you hear about the cross-

eyed teacher who lost her job

because she couldn't control her

pupils?

• When you get a bladder infec-

tion, urine trouble.

• Broken pencils are pointless.

• What do you call a dinosaur

with an extensive vocabulary?

A thesaurus.

• I dropped out of communism

class because of Louisy Marx.

• I got a job at a bakery because

I kneaded dough.

• Velcro - what a rip off!

• Don't worry about old age;

it doesn't last.
Materials, salaries, equipment rentals, author royalties, and utilities all increase annually. The slow evisceration of government funding for the arts and the fallout from the Great Recession have made the not-for-profit landscape placed greater emphasis on corporate and individual philanthropy and, of course, on ticket sales. The relationship between "town and gown," while often mutually beneted over time by competing objectives and methodologies, although in recent years greater comity has reigned. In...streamed productions, metaphoric tumbleweeds blow through the Theatre District. Both the Playhouse and the department "normal," and it will be exceedingly interesting to see how the two institutions reinvent themselves, both separately and together.

Weiss contributed $1.3 million and the Regents and the campus provided the rest of the almost $6 million budget. The Playhouse's reputation in only two seasons. The Playhouse still needed a third theatre for year-round operation, since the department also housed the university's only full-time drama and theatre programs. The Weiss Theatre mounted 105 world premieres, commissioned 58 new works, and sent 33 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre. However, keeping a not-for-profit status and the court's decision in the Fall Quarter in exchange for more MFA student internships. This was essential for the Playhouse, because the expense of running an institutional theatre with only three months of income made long-term survival untenable. It was a critical step toward the Playhouse's goal of year-round operation. In summer 1991 the Weiss Forum Theatre, a capacious thrust-stage theatre seating 400, was added. The Playhouse's much-anticipated debut production. The complex also housed WOW (Without Walls), three rehearsal halls, and additional shop space. The Playhouse staff were especially delighted with the new building; since 1982 their ofce space had cramped, vermin-infested, and moldy trailers across from the Weiss Theatre. A restaurant, Jac, was also built into the Forum Theatre, but it never became a viable destination and has undergone changes in name, management, and menu in the intervening years. McAnuff turned over the Playhouse reins in 1995 to his onetime protégé and assistant—and respected director in his own right—Michael Greif, an alumnus of UCSD's MFA program. In his five-year tenure Greif forged fertile relationships with prominent playwrights and implemented a mini-rehearsal program. He scored enormous personal success directing Rent—the national tour premiered at the Weiss before going on the road—and in 2000 he released the poster to Anne Hamburger, an Off-Broadway producer. However, that regime was ill-fated, and a year later McAnuff returned as interim artistic director. In 2005 McAnuff's world premiere of Jersey Boys opened in the Weiss; its subsequent Broadway and international success provided the Playhouse with a welcome income stream.

Christopher Ashley was appointed as artistic director in 2007. He operated as a director of a large theatre, it seemed like an audacious and improbable choice for "conservative" La Jolla. Soon, though, the board's faith in him would prove inspired. He infused the Playhouse with a contemporary vision and soon catapulted the theatre into the national spotlight.

In summer 1991, the Weiss Forum Theatre, a capacious thrust-stage theatre seating 400, was added. The Playhouse's much-anticipated first season in nineteen years, comprising three productions, debuted in spring 1983 with Peter Sellars's production of Brecht and Loni Feuchtberger's rarely-performed The Visions of Simone Machard. Many theatergoers, who were probably hoping for something more akin to Blithe Spirit, found the production far too avant-garde and walked out in droves, but the fact remained: La Jolla Playhouse was back, and most locals were ecstatic. In 1984, McAnuff brought a new musical to La Jolla, the first of many. Big River, an adaptation of Huckelberry Finn, proved a true crowd pleaser and transferred the following spring to Broadway, where it won seven Tony Awards. This cemented the Playhouse's reputation in only two seasons. The Playhouse began to use the dilapidated Warren Theatre for smaller productions, expanding the number of shows it could produce in its short summer season. In 1989, a new agreement gave the Playhouse the use of the Weiss in the fall quarter in exchange for more MFA student internships. This was essential for the Playhouse, because the expense of running an institutional theatre with only three months of income made long-term survival untenable. It was a critical step toward the Playhouse's goal of year-round operation. In 1991, the Weiss Forum Theatre, a capacious thrust-stage theatre seating 400, was added. The Playhouse's much-anticipated first season in nineteen years, comprising three productions, debuted in spring 1983 with Peter Sellars's production of Brecht and Loni Feuchtberger's rarely-performed The Visions of Simone Machard. Many theatergoers, who were probably hoping for something more akin to Blithe Spirit, found the production far too avant-garde and walked out in droves, but the fact remained: La Jolla Playhouse was back, and most locals were ecstatic. In 1984, McAnuff brought a new musical to La Jolla, the first of many. Big River, an adaptation of Huckelberry Finn, proved a true crowd pleaser and transferred the following spring to Broadway, where it won seven Tony Awards. This cemented the Playhouse's reputation in only two seasons. The Playhouse began to use the dilapidated Warren Theatre for smaller productions, expanding the number of shows it could produce in its short summer season. In 1989, a new agreement gave the Playhouse the use of the Weiss in the fall quarter in exchange for more MFA student internships. This was essential for the Playhouse, because the expense of running an institutional theatre with only three months of income made long-term survival untenable. It was a critical step toward the Playhouse's goal of year-round operation. In 1991, the Weiss Forum Theatre, a capacious thrust-stage theatre seating 400, was added. The Playhouse's much-anticipated first season in nineteen years, comprising three productions, debut...
The board hired Alan Levey as managing director to oversee the finances and administration of the theatre. Levey, who had led the California Shakespearean Festival, provided the producing expertise that is fundamental to any institutional theatre. The hunt for an artistic director could now commence. The search uncovered many worthy candidates; a new theatre in a spot like La Jolla was a plum posting. The board caused quite a stir, then, when in 1982 it announced the appointment of thirty-year-old Des McAnuff. A Toronto-bred rock musician, playwright, and director, McAnuff had caught the eye of Joseph Papp, the founder of the Public Theatre in New York City, and his productions at the Public of Henry IV, Pt. 1 and his own Lee Antoine Predock–designed complex comprises the main theatre and studios were originally and... These worthy activities comply with the requirements for the Playhouse's not-for-profit status. However, keeping a not-for-profit organisation is a perennial challenge. Revenue from commercial transfers can help balance the books or even build a reserve fund, but institutional theatres shouldn't rely on this income as a permanent means of support; eventually, commercial success will be required. The Playhouse "has [since 1983] mounted 105 world premieres, commissioned 58 new works, and sent 33 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre." However, keeping a not-for-profit theatre running in the black is a perennial challenge. Revenue from commercial transfers can help balance the books or even build a reserve fund, but institutional theatres shouldn't rely on this income as a permanent means of support; eventually, commercial productions can help but are not sufficient. The costs of running La Jolla Playhouse are considerable and keep rising, even though it operates rent-free.

Christopher Ashley was appointed as artistic director in 2004. He made his mark by taking on ambitious projects with smaller local theatres and  inaugurated the popular site-specific WOW (Without Walls) Festival. His productions of Memphis and Caroline, or Change were enthusiastically received and generated income from Broadway and tours. He continued the POP [Performance Outreach Program] tour, which has been well-received, and expanded the Playhouse's extensive educational outreach and summer programs. These worthy activities comply with the requirements for the Playhouse's not-for-profit status and the court's decision in the Children's Aid case. According to its website, the Playhouse "has [since 1983] mounted 105 world premieres, commissioned 58 new works, and sent 33 productions to Broadway, garnering a total of 38 Tony Awards, including the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre." However, keeping a not-for-profit theatre running in the black is a perennial challenge. Revenue from commercial transfers can help balance the books or even build a reserve fund, but institutional theatres shouldn't rely on this income as a permanent means of support; eventually, commercial productions can help but are not sufficient.
Acrimony between Peterson and the Playhouse board eventually led to the appointment in 1971 of Chip Goodwin as president. Goodwin would shepherd the Playhouse through this next critical period, during which the Playhouse and university agreed to maintain separate artistic and legal identities. In 1972, Arthur Wagner was hired to head the new Department of Drama. Unlike Langham, he was not the servant of the Playhouse.

The department and the Playhouse agreed over each one, eventually agreeing on a proscenium. The Children’s Aid appeal was finally settled in 1976 in the Playhouse’s favor, resulting in the conveyance of four real estate parcels for the Playhouse to sell (the largest, Rancho Zorro, was sold to Watt Industries, which built Fairbanks Ranch on the site). The total income was about $2.2 million. The court directed the Playhouse to build the theatre within five years (the judge knew the history of the Playhouse’s unsuccessful attempts and wanted to provide legal incentive). One key proviso in the court’s decision required the Playhouse to furnish educational activities for underprivileged children.

In 1974, the Playhouse and the university reached the conclusion that formal collaborative communication might be more effective than ad hoc meetings, flurries of memos, and agitated phone calls and formed a joint performing arts board to make the myriad decisions involved in building a new theatre. The first agreement stipulated that the Playhouse would pay for the theatre’s construction (the expected windfall from the proceedings against Children’s Aid Foundation obviated the need for the Regents’ $1.5 million); the Regents would own the theatre; and the Playhouse would use it rent-free until his death in 1994 at the age of 102. Another local “philanthropist” featured in the saga: J. Mandell Dominelli. As his was the largest single private donation, the theatre would bear his name. He would remain an invaluable board member...
least 1,700 seats, classrooms, workshops, and an outdoor amphitheatre, and brought in Bertrand Goldberg, the most Chicago architect of all design it all with a seemingly generous $3 million budget (Goldberg had never designed a theatre). Once again, despite Marian Longstreth's efforts to keep the project out of the newspapers, Stewart recommended that the university fund half the costs in exchange for half the annual usage, since he knew that a university-owned theatre was a distant dream. Chancellor John Galbraith promised this plan to UC president Clark Kerr, noting that if the university didn't carry some of the financial burden as a result, a future university theatre would have to be funded entirely by UC. The Regents approved the 50-50 plan in early 1965 for a theatre to open in 1968, but the Playhouse struggled to raise its share. In 1966, two prominent local businessmen and Playhouse board members, stock-in-the-box founder Robert O. Peterson and banker Richard T. Silberman (later convicted of money laundering), agreed that San Diego needed to burnish its cultural reputation to attract more businesses. They fundraised however, he had grave reservations about the Playhouse’s artistic credibility; a summer stock company producing adaptations of old chestnut shouldn’t dictate the direction of the new shared theatre, even if the Playhouse paid for it. “We are in danger...of being tied to an essentially commercial venture...Better no theatre, than one which will get us off to a false start,” he wrote in an undated statement. He argued that the university should have complete authority over the building’s design as well as the Playhouse’s programming (the board rejected both demands). He also thought that a prosenium theatre didn’t reflect advances in theatre architecture and stagework. Peck advocated for a year-round operation with a university-affiliated training program, and this required a visionary leader. He admired both the expansive thrust stage and repertory-company ethos of the celebrated Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, which had opened to national acclaim a few years earlier. Peck and Stewart tried to woo the distinguished English director and producer Tyrone Guthrie to La Jolla, but his commitment to Minneapolis was firm. He died of an associated real estate. In 1967, the IRS moved to strip the foundation’s exempt status, charging that Carlstrom was employing land swaps for personal financial gain. The California attorney general moved to dismiss the foundation. Peterson and Silberman petitioned the court to designate the Playhouse as recipient of the assets, which by law had to be distributed to another charitable organization. The attorney general endorsed the petition, but both Carlstrom’s creditors and Carlstrom himself appealed, and the Playhouse countered.

During what would become a decade-long appeals process, the relationship between the university and the Playhouse continued in fractious fashion. The design for Goldberg’s theatre complex, which looked like a corrugated, curved catamaran, was crammed into the twelve-acre site. The University reconsidered the location due to complications from the city’s 1955 frontage lease and growing antipathy from neighbors who didn’t want this facility built, literally, in their backyards. Later records showed that the footprint was inadequate, and in 1969 the Playhouse quashed the land back to the Regents. The board considered the land where the Escondido hotel now stands (the theatre would have been part of the campus’s proposed “commercial inclusion area” within a parcel that William Black had deeded to the university in 1967), but the residents of La Jolla Farms opposed the entire scheme. The university revived its plan for a “fine arts cluster” in the new Fourth College and east of Extension, but again, the Playhouse resisted an interior site (the university soon abandoned the arts cluster because of funding shortfalls). And as the clock ticked, the land and new theatre kept growing, eventually topping $5 million. In 1968, the board released architect Goldberg from his contract. Langham saw the writing on the wall and resigned in 1970, after having taught a class or directed a production here. He soon took over the directorship of the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis. His West Coast theatre complex was never built.
nineteen years, although no one knew that when the curtain fell. It wasn’t just the aging La Jolla High School auditorium, the lack of artistic vision for the future, or a budgetary shortfall that brought this era to an end. UCSD had hired John Stewart, creation of its arts departments, and Stewart had strong opinions about the relationship between the university and the Playhouse. He felt the campus needed a theatre, and it affiliated with the university but not buried within it, especially since parking was plentiful in the original site.

It made sense to Stewart to partner with the Playhouse…

By Steven Adler
Professor Emeritus, Theatre

Recap of Part I (from the January issue): In 1947, a handful of theatre-starved young Hollywood film stars, among them Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire, and Mel Ferrer, created a summer stock theatre at La Jolla High School. Its success led to a search for a permanent home, spearheaded by the Playhouse’s indefatigable board chair, Marian Longstreth. This quest eventually resulted in what would prove to be a fruitful partnership with the new University of California campus that was about to open. The Playhouse board undertook a fundraising campaign in the mid-50s to build a new theatre on Regents-owned land (where the Venter Institute stands today), but the efforts fell short of the mark.

Part II: The quest to raise enough money to bring out the backhoes and build a theatre was plagued by setbacks and contretemps among the Regents, UCOP, UCSD, and the Playhouse. There were legal issues, siting issues, fundraising issues, leadership issues…but it all came down to money. The board could never notch a sizable fundraising victory (they were turned down by the Ford Foundation and similar philanthropic organizations). Celebrity-studded benefit balls brought in some cash, as did a local gala premiere of To Kill a Mockingbird, which of course starred Gregory Peck. The board harvested pledges from local industries…but could never reach its target.

The final production of the 1964 season featured the improbable casting of Zsa Zsa Gabor and Kim Novak in Blithe Spirit and was the Playhouse’s last stand for a thirty-two year run. UCSD had hired John Stewart to oversee the creation of its arts departments, and Stewart had strong opinions about the relationship between the university and the Playhouse. He affirmed that the campus needed a theatre, and eventually a drama program. Stewart wanted to relocate the theatre to the heart of campus, but this was rejected by the board; they wanted the Playhouse affiliated with the university but not buried within it, especially since parking was plentiful in the original site.

It made sense to Stewart to partner with the Playhouse...